

History

The site of Kiptopeke State Park was purchased by the Virginia Ferry Corp. for the northern terminus of the ferry which traveled from Virginia Beach to the Eastern Shore. In 1949, when the terminus was moved from Cape Charles, the site was named Kiptopeke Beach in honor of the younger brother of the king of the Accawmack Indians who had befriended early settlers to the area. Kiptopeke means big water.

Features

Beach frontage—4,276 feet along the Chesapeake Bay.

Breakwater—A row of nine surplus World War II concrete ships form a breakwater approximately 1,500 feet from the shore.

Water depth—Water is relatively shallow north of the pier and is suitable for family swimming. Water is approximately 13 to 16 feet deep at the end of the pier.

Swimming Beach—Kiptopeke's northern beach fronts nearly half a mile on the Chesapeake Bay and features a beach and lifeguarded swimming area between Memorial Day and Labor Day. A modern beach house is open for beach users. No swimming prior to dawn or after dusk.

Camping—Our full-service campground offers sites with water, electric and sewer hookups, warm showers, modern restrooms and a primitive camp area with no hookups. Each site has a picnic table and a fire ring.

Picnicking—Picnic tables and grills are available. Picnic shelters accommodating up to 72 are available for reservations. A handicap accessible playground is also available.

Hiking—Stroll through upland hardwood forest along the 1.5-mile Baywoods Trail and look for tracks of fox, deer and birds. There are five dunewalks, three of which are handicap accessible.

Fishing—The concrete ships located off the park's waterfront offer some of Virginia's finest fishing. A dual boat ramp provides boaters access to the Chesapeake Bay. The southern beach is great for surf fishing and beach combing. The large fishing pier provides 1,000 feet of fishing opportunities 24 hour a day.

Programming

Interpretive-Naturalist Programs: Canoeing, crabbing, fishing, campfire programs, junior ranger activities and more are available Memorial Day-Labor Day. Hawk observatory and bird banding station programs offered in September and October. Please ask for the summer/fall interpretive brochure for more information.

Environmental Education Workshop: Teachers have the opportunity to attend the EPA's award winning Your Backyard Classroom Workshops.

School children then may visit through teacher-led activities.

Birding

Eastern Shore Bird Festival: Held every weekend following the first Wednesday in October, this family festival includes many Kiptopeke programs. Call (757) 787-2460 for additional information.

Kiptopeke Bird Banding Station: Since 1963, Kiptopeke has been the site every fall of bird population studies sponsored by the Central Virginia Wildlife Observatory and licensed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Volunteers have banded more than 250,000 migratory birds.

Kiptopeke Hawk Observatory: Since 1977, members of the Central Virginia Wildlife Observatory have observed more than 500,000 birds of prey at Kiptopeke, consisting of 10-12 various species.

While visiting the bird banding areas, please observe the following:

- Obey all signs.
- Do not disturb banding nets or equipment.
- You are welcome to speak with volunteers in the banding areas, but please visit briefly and allow their work to continue.
- These research activities are regulated by federal law. Possession of many bird species is prohibited by law except with proper permit.
- Designated bird banding area parking is located on Kiptopeke Drive at the bottom of the hill approximately half a mile past the park entrance. Vehicular entry into the natural area is by special permission only.

Campground Rules

- Camping is allowed only in designated campgrounds and only after following the proper check-in procedure. This procedure is described in the Reservation and Fees Guide available at the park office. Those parks allowing payment for site after set-up will have appropriate information posted.
- Registration for a state park campsite must be completed by a member of the camping party 18 years of age or older. This person accepts responsibility for the remainder of the camping party.
- Campsites are designed to be used by a maximum of six people or one family.
- One motor vehicle, in addition to the camping unit, is permitted per site. Only the camping unit listed on the campsite application is permitted.
- State park campgrounds are intended for the use of the traveling public. The maximum camping stay per park is 14 days in any 30-day period.

- Check-out time is 3 p.m. No camping units, vehicles or personal property may be left or allowed to remain on site after the termination of the permitted camping period.
- Several sites are handicap modified.
- The pedestal is the center of the campsite at all hook-up sites.
- Laundry room open from 9 a.m. - 9 p.m.
- Quiet hours posted in all state park campgrounds must be observed.
- Fires must be confined to grills, campstoves or designated fire rings.
- Pets are allowed in state park campgrounds. A fee will be charged for each pet per night.
- At the time of registration, campers must inform the park staff of the names of visitors expected to arrive at the campsite. Visitors will not be admitted to camping area unless so identified. Visitors are permitted between 8 a.m. and 10 p.m.

Frequent Visitors Save Money

Annual passes for parking and fishing offer the frequent visitor greater savings. Stop by the park office for details.

Virginia State Parks Reservation Center

To receive more information on Virginia State Parks or to make a cabin or campsite reservation, call 1-800-933-PARK (or in the Richmond calling area 225-3867).

Join Us in the Parks—

DCR's Volunteer Program

DCR offers diverse opportunities for volunteers in most state parks and natural areas throughout the state. Inquire at the park office for details.

For more information, contact:

Kiptopeke State Park
3540 Kiptopeke Drive
Cape Charles, Virginia 23310
(757) 331-2267

You can also visit our home page at www.state.va.us/dcr/



Department of Conservation & Recreation

CONSERVING VIRGINIA'S NATURAL & RECREATIONAL RESOURCES

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Richmond, Virginia 23219
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VIRGINIA

STATE PARKS

Kiptopeke State Park Guide

Cape Charles, Virginia

Virginia State Parks provide
A Natural Legacy
of outdoor activities and
programs. They are an important
part of DCR's efforts to promote
a strong conservation ethic.
These efforts ensure that the
best of Virginia's natural
resources will be protected and
available for future generations.

Welcome to Kiptopeke, the only state park on the Eastern Shore. The 590-acre site offers a variety of outdoor recreation and ways to learn about our natural world. The park, like the entire Eastern Shore, has a long and colorful history. Park programming explores that history as well as the area's abundant natural treasures.

Kiptopeke State Park is a park under development. Local residents and repeat visitors will have the opportunity to see the park as it evolves with emphasis on day-use facilities and programs relating to the Chesapeake Bay. To make your visit safer and more pleasant, we ask that you observe the following regulations:



Swimming and wading are allowed only in the designated area. Shallow water hazards, steep dropoffs and boating traffic make other areas of our park unsafe for swimming or wading.



The public use or display of alcoholic beverages is prohibited.



Hiking trails are for pedestrians only. Bicycles are permitted on regular park roads. Help us preserve our dunes. Stay on the dune walkways.



Help preserve our park. Please don't cut or mar any plants or trees. Collecting animal or plant life is allowed only for scientific purposes by permit from the Richmond office.



Pets are permitted in all state parks, but they must be kept in an enclosed area or on a leash, not to exceed six feet, at all times. No pets are allowed in swimming areas or toilet facilities.

Please observe all park signs. Campground areas are for registered guests only.



Please help us keep the park clean by placing litter in the proper receptacles. Please recycle aluminum cans.



No fishing off courtesy docking, rock jetty or north face of pier. No overnight dockage; only 15 minute courtesy dockage permitted.

